



## THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPT. 23, 2009

CONTACT: GEORGE HARDEEN  
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR  
OFFICE – 928-871-7917  
CELL – 928-309-8532  
pressoffice@opvp.org

# Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., praises public safety, judicial staff work to obtain \$74 million in Recovery Act funds for jails

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., has credited Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety and judicial branch staff with the legwork necessary to secure nearly \$74 million in Recovery Act funds to build three new jails on the Navajo Nation.

Constructing the justice centers with Recovery Act funds will address the breakdown in the Navajo public safety system attributed to the extreme lack of jail beds, Mr. Cowboy said.

“Division Director Samson Cowboy and his staff, Navajo Nation Department of Corrections Director Delores Greyeyes, along with Chief Justice Herb Yazzie and judicial branch staff, traveled to many chapters, obtained the necessary resolutions, and prepared the application for these needed detention facilities,” the President said. “It’s a major accomplishment to at last receive this jail funding so we have a place to put perpetrators. Our law enforcement officers will finally see offenders they catch stay in jail.”

*“It’s a major accomplishment to at last receive this jail funding so we have a place to put perpetrators. Our law enforcement officers will finally see offenders they catch stay in jail.”*

– Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr.

The Navajo Nation Department of Corrections will use \$38.5 million to build a 48-bed multi-purpose correctional facility in Tuba City, a \$31 million, 38-bed detention facility in Kayenta, and \$3.8 million to construct a new adult correctional facility in Ramah, N.M.

The centers will provide a deterrent to crime instead of the current revolving door, removing dangerous criminals from Navajo communities.

The centers will provide space for a range of culturally-appropriate services to inmates from pre-trial services, alternatives to incarceration, and services while individuals are serving time in jail.

“The proposals were submitted for the five priorities, which are Tuba City, Crownpoint, Chinle, Shiprock, and Window Rock,” Mr Cowboy said. “Also included were Dilkon and Kayenta. Ramah submitted on their own. The staff from public safety, judicial and government services did a wonderful job to make it happen. This shows how the two current administrations are working together.”

Director Cowboy said the facilities will fulfill most of President Shirley’s original 2004 Navajo Nation Judicial-Public Safety Facilities Development Program master plan for the replacement of deteriorating jails on the Navajo Nation.

The current 2,384-square foot Ramah detention facility was constructed in 1975. It houses cells for men and women, booking rooms, administrative offices and a dispatch center.

That plan, first envision in his \$500 million bond proposal, was to design and construct detention, courts and police facilities that would provide for a “one-stop shop” for justice professionals.

Originally designed as a holding facility, the Ramah jail has been used to house long-term inmates and has

created severe overcrowding conditions. Other problems in the current facility concern structural deterioration.

This includes a faulty roof and cracks in walls and no accessibility standards.

Mr. Cowboy said building the new facility will provide work, a paycheck and pride for the local work force. The

“We still have ways to go in obtaining land,” Mr. Cowboy said. “Tuba City Chapter did a great job with preparing the site. We give our thanks to the chapter officials, in particular Tuba Chapter Coordinator Priscilla Littlefoot, for the work they did.”

The Navajo Nation Judicial Branch received \$450,000 for its Navajo Peacemaker Youth Education and Apprentice Program. The program will provide prevention services through traditional dispute resolution, violence prevention, community building and traditional teachings to impact risk factors for delinquency. That includes gang membership and truancy prevention, school drop-out prevention, parenting education, and after school programs; and providing interventions for court-involved youth.

The project will establish and use a curriculum for traditional teaching that blends Navajo peacemaking and western best practices and therapies for dispute

projects will create career opportunities for corrections officers, food services and other support personnel.

“It is great that we got this but more work needs to be done to ensure other areas get funding,” Mr. Cowboy said. “We had to demolish the old facilities in Tuba City and Chinle to prepare the sites.”

resolution, violence prevention, community building in schools. It will allow Navajo Peacemakers to work individually with delinquent and at-risk youth and their families, and it will establish a youth peer apprentice peacemaker program.

President Shirley’s original plan called for five large, three medium-sized, and four small facilities that would each include Peacemaking Courts, three judicial courts, a total of 96 detention beds and police offices. It would have also included one correctional rehabilitation center with 388 beds.

The bond proposal did not move forward because of the Navajo Nation Council’s concerns at the time about paying off the bond even though interest rates were very affordable and the plan would have stimulated jobs and the economy across the Navajo Nation.

###